

Top 10 Free (Or Nearly Free) Ways To Satisfy the 'Disney Bug' Between Visits: A Walt Disney World Planning Article

by Sarah Donohue, PassPorter Guest Contributor

You tear up when you see Disney parks commercials come on TV. You look back longingly on your planning notes from your last trip. You joke about stowing away on that plane headed for Orlando instead of disembarking in Chicago for your work conference (at least, you think you were joking...).

As much as we would love to be able to visit the parks whenever the mood strikes, most of us have limited time or money and need to spread out our visits over the course of a few years or longer. The gaps in between trips, especially when you don't yet have your next trip planned or booked, can be tough. I'm here to share some low- or no- cost ways that I have been able to scratch the Disney itch between visits (after all, you want to keep putting money aside for that next trip! ;)).

1. Discover and Listen to your favorite Disney podcasts: It was actually by listening to Disney podcasts in preparation for our honeymoon a few years ago that I realized just how awesome podcasts could be! I've listened to them everywhere -- in the car, at the gym, at work, and while walking the dog. There are many Disney podcasts out there -- just search "Disney" in iTunes for a taste! If you're reading this, you probably already know what a wonderful tool the [Disney Every Week with the PassPorter Mom's Podcast](#) is (you DO listen to the PassPorter Moms, don't you?!). In addition, I really enjoy Lou Mongello's [WDW Radio](#) podcast -- he not only answers travel questions but also covers Disney park and company history. Before we got married, I also listened to the [Disney Weddings Podcast](#) from PassPorter author Carrie Hayward. Whether you are interested in touring, history, pop culture, or news, there is bound to be a podcast (or five!) that will catch your attention. For me, listening to a few Disney podcasts helps me stay in the loop so planning our next trip is a breeze. They also help my favorite places not feel so far away!

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□2. Follow Disney blogs and participate in online fan communities: As many podcasts as there are, there are even more great Disney blogs! I really love the [Disney Food Blog](#) founded by AJ Wolfe (though you might want to avoid it on an empty stomach) and [Disney Tourist Blog](#) by Tom and Sarah Bricker (check out Tom's incredible photography!). In addition, connecting with online fan communities such as the [PassPorter boards](#) is a great way to meet and get to know others who

love Disney as much as you do. If you can't be visiting the parks at this moment, helping someone else plan their upcoming trip or reading another trip report can often be a good substitute. Sometimes great friendships can even come from the people you meet in these communities!

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□3. "Visit" Disney with your nose! The part of your brain that processes scents is directly connected to the parts of your brain that trigger emotion and memory. This is why particular scents can instantly take you back to another time and place. I know of several people who use this to their advantage when they are missing Disney: some will use a specific air freshener in their rooms whenever they go to Disney -- then, when they pull out that scent at home, they will be reminded of Disney memories. I use a specific scented sunscreen while at the parks, and am always reminded of getting ready to head to the parks in the morning when I pull out that sunscreen at home. Or, if you would rather be reminded of specific parks smells (perhaps the Haunted Mansion or Main Street Bakery!), visit [Etsy](#) where you can find candles inspired by a handful of the most well-known scents. SpireSide (formerly Anthology Candles) is the most well-known shop in this area and has been featured in publications like the Huffington Post.

4. Visit the Disney store: If you live in or near a major metropolitan area, you likely have a Disney store relatively nearby. Whenever we visit our mall that houses the Disney Store, we always stop in just for a few minutes, even though we don't usually buy anything (that's the key to keeping this tip "low cost!"). Even though we are not physically in the parks, I'm convinced that this experience can be the next best thing at home! I've always experienced the same Disney service from the Cast Members here that I've come to appreciate while in the parks, and it is awesome to know that the magic can be experienced just minutes from home. We have been in our Disney store several times as kids have been squealing and giggling at a storytelling event presented by the Cast Members, and I hear there is even a very Disney opening ceremony -- though I have yet to make it to one myself!

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□5. Go on a YouTube odyssey! [YouTube](#) is full of ways to get your Disney fix -- from vloggers to ridealongs to vintage Disney Travel Planning videos, you can find just about anything you want to see at Disney on YouTube. However, my personal favorite YouTube find are the Disney Parks Music Playlists. Just search "Disney Parks Music" and you will find a goldmine of any walkaround loop, queue music, or show music that you can dream of! This has become my personal soundtrack to cleaning; I'm still waiting for animated forest animals to come help me out, though!

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□6. Watch Disney movies from the comfort of your home: Sometimes I find it comforting to go back and watch the inspirations for many aspects of the parks and resorts -- you never know what connection you'll make during your umpteenth viewing of a movie, or the next time you visit your favorite attraction! You know your collection at home, but with Netflix's new exclusive partnership with Disney, you may have even more to choose from online! A few of Netflix's current offerings include: Zootopia, Finding Dory, Tarzan, The Emperor's New Groove, Lilo & Stitch, Pirates of the Caribbean, The Parent Trap, Fantasia, The Nightmare Before Christmas, and a collection of recent Disney short films (including my personal favorite, Feast!).

□7. Spend down time with Disney-themed coloring books, puzzles, or games: Do you unwind after work with a good coloring book? Does your family love game nights? There are plenty of ways to incorporate Disney into these hobbies -- thanks to the current coloring book sensation, there are now Disney coloring books for truly any age! Many popular game series (Apples to Apples, Cranium, and Family Feud, to name a few) also have Disney-themed editions so you can really test your knowledge and love of all things Disney.

□8. Bring your Disney souvenirs into your daily life: When I am at the parks and looking for souvenirs, I like to purchase items that I will see or use in my daily life. For instance, almost every morning, I drink my coffee out of a Disney mug. Remembering moments from our Disney trips (and pretending my coffee is Kona coffee!) is one of my ways to start the day out on a positive note. Others may have art or photos framed from their Disney trips -- or perhaps you like to carry a Disney purse. Either way, these are great reminders of Disney magic and also are excellent conversation starters with like-minded fans!

□9. Incorporate Disney into your wardrobe: Do you have Disney t-shirts that you always wear when you visit the parks? Find opportunities to tie these into your at home wardrobe! I can't help but smile when I pull out my World Showcase tee at home -- even if I am just running Saturday errands! Can't wear your Disney gear to work? You can always experiment with the Disneybound trend! If you're not familiar with it, Disneybounding is a way to "channel" your favorite Disney characters through your outfit by wearing color themes or symbols that represent that character. For example, if you were Disneybounding as Elsa, you would probably want to wear shades of blue and snowflake earrings. Visit <http://www.disneybound.co> to see ideas from Leslie Kay, the original Disneybounder!

□10. Fix Disney treats at home! Shortly after we got home from our honeymoon, my husband asked me if we could have "those Magic

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Kingdom waffles" (aka Sleepy Hollow's Fresh Fruit Waffle Sandwiches) for dinner! They continue to be a favorite treat for us, whether we are in the Magic Kingdom or at home. Take some time to experiment with your own versions of favorite Disney treats: AllEars.net has a recipe for Tonga Toast, and there are a lot of Dole Whip recipes out there -- find your favorite! While it's tough to get the EXACT Disney taste (is pixie dust an ingredient there or something?), you can get close enough to hold you over until your next trip!

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□ There you have it! These activities have brought great joy to me in between trips to Disney, and I hope that I have been able to provide you with some new ideas, as well! How do you keep the Disney magic alive in between visit planning?

About The Author: Sarah Donohue has loved dreaming of Disney trips since she was a child, regularly sneaking off with her mom's guide books to dream up her perfect vacation! Now an adult, she loves being able to plan her own trips, but still finds herself dreaming in between! She lives in Las Vegas with her husband and their dog, Perry (the Platypup)!

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